



12 May 2014

New mums needed for biggest type 1 diabetes study

MEDIA LAUNCH
Tuesday, 20th May, 1pm
Details below

A new national study is seeking up to 400 pregnant women in NSW or those who have recently given birth to help understand the possible causes of type 1 diabetes.

The study – conducted by researchers from across Australia, including The Children's Hospital at Westmead, the University of Sydney, the University of Adelaide and the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute in Melbourne– is the biggest of its kind in the southern hemisphere and is now recruiting women in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia.

Type 1 diabetes is one of the most common childhood onset chronic diseases and its incidence has doubled over the last 20 years, now affecting at least 120,000 Australians.

Type 1 diabetes results from the body's immune system attacking and destroying the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas – but the actual reasons for this remain unknown. It is thought environment factors, such as viruses, bacteria, diet and/or lifestyle may trigger this process.

The study, looking at environmental exposures during pregnancy through to early childhood, will investigate how the world we live in could be contributing to the development of the autoimmune response and type 1 diabetes. In NSW, the study is led by Endocrine Specialist, Associate Professor Maria Craig from The Children's Hospital at Westmead.

"We believe children are exposed in very early life to the environmental triggers that lead to type 1 diabetes – perhaps even before they're born," Associate Professor Craig says.

The national study, called the Environmental Determinants of Islet Autoimmunity (ENDIA) study, is funded by a \$1 million grant from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and a further \$500,000 grant from the international Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF).

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ENDIA researchers will investigate the relationship between genes and environmental exposures, including nutrition, exercise, weight gain, viral infections, and the microbiome – the term given to the trillions of micro-organisms that are in our bodies.

“This is the first study to examine the environment in such a comprehensive way, commencing in pregnancy. It is essential that we find what triggers this devastating life-long disease before we can successfully prevent it” Associate Professor Craig said.

The study is looking for: pregnant women whose unborn baby has a first-degree relative with type 1 diabetes. This could be the mother herself, the baby’s father or an older sibling of the baby. Newborn babies less than six months old with a first-degree relative with type 1 diabetes are also eligible for the study.

Visit www.endia.org.au for more details.

Media Launch

- What:** Launching of NSW recruitment for ENDIA study
- When:** Tuesday, 20th May, 1pm
- Where:** Kids Research Institute (located adjacent to The Children’s Hospital at Westmead).
Media will be escorted from the Hospital’s foyer.
- Who:** Associate Professor Maria Craig
Philippa and Steven Manley and their children; Angus (8), Clifford (7), Evelyn (5) and Charles (8months),
The Manley family are participating in the study. Philippa was monitored during pregnancy and now baby Charles is seen regularly. Evelyn was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes at the age of 3.

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